

While Egypt was being invaded by Crusaders from the West, it was simultaneously facing an even more brutal threat from the East. The Mongols were at this time in the middle of expanding what was to become the biggest land empire in history, and they were the most savage conquerors in history. The specialty of the Mongols was siege warfare. Ibn Kathir said that "they killed so many Muslims and non-Muslims, in so many lands - old and young - that they cannot be enumerated. In general, they wouldn't enter a land except that they killed every fighter and man in it, and many of its women and children. They plundered what they needed, and burned what they didn't need. They would even pile up the silk that they couldn't carry with them and set fire to it, watching as it went up in flames. They would ruin homes, and would burn whatever they couldn't ruin by other means. They would burn mosques more than anything else - may Allah curse them - and they would use Muslims they had taken prisoner as soldiers and human shields with which to besiege others. If these fighters proved unskilled, they would kill them."

He then quoted another historian, Ibn al-Athir, who actually lived to see what the Mongols had done and wrote about it at great length: "These Mongols did things not heard of in the past or the present. Imagine, a group emerging from the outskirts of China, and it doesn't even take a year for some of them to reach the borders of Armenia from one side, and they cross over Iraq by way of Hamdhan. By Allah, surely those who come after us will see such events recorded in history and will refuse to believe them, and couldn't be blamed for this. Whoever denies it should look to the fact that I and every historian of this era have written the same details at a time in which everyone knows what happened." He also said: "One would not be exaggerating to say that since the creation of Adam until now, the world has not been afflicted with their likes... These people did not leave anyone - they killed men, women, and children. They cut open the bellies of pregnant women and killed the fetuses inside."

He then went on for a number of pages detailing their takeover of territory all the way from northeast China to the western borders of Syria. Look, for example, at how Genghis Khan entered the city of Marw (Merv, Turkmenistan): "The Mongols then headed for Marw with Genghis Khan. Nearly 200,000 fighters consisting of Arabs and others were camped around it to defend it. They fought fiercely until the Muslims were beaten." They then "laid siege to the city for five days, and gave its governor a false promise of safety. When he came out, they betrayed him and the people of the city. They killed them, plundered them, enslaved them, and subjected them to various forms of torture. All in all, they killed 700,000 human beings in a single day."

He described that "people were utterly terrified of them, to the point that if just one of them entered a part of a city and faced a hundred men, not a single one would step forward to face him. He would then proceed to kill these men, one by one, until he had killed them all, and none of them would raise a finger to defend himself. He would then plunder the entire area by himself. One of their women even dressed up as a man, entered a home, and killed everyone in the home by herself."

They had so completely destroyed everything in their path that it was said that a horseman could ride long distances behind them and not stumble over anything. As we know, this path of destruction soon reached Baghdad. Baghdad was significant because it was at the time the capital of the Islamic state, and the seat of the khilafah. Ibn Kathir said: "People differed over how many Muslims they killed in Baghdad. Some said 800,000. Others said 1,800,000. Others said the number of killed reached two million." In any case, once they entered, the Mongols went on killing in Baghdad for forty straight days. Ibn Kathir again: "At the end of those forty days, Baghdad was nothing more than ruins. Nobody, except for the rare exception, was seen walking anywhere. Dead bodies were piled up in the streets like small hills. Rain began to fall on them, and the bodies began to rot. The stench of rotting corpses began to permeate the city, to the point that the air itself was affected. A severe plague then emerged and spread, and the foul air made its way to Syria. Many people died due to this air." The dead included Shaykh Muhi ad-Din Yusuf, son of the great scholar Ibn al-Jawzi. But more significantly, the khalifah al-Musta'sim had been executed by the Mongol leader Hulako. For the first time in the history of the Ummah, it had no khalifah.

The Mongols wanted to continue westward. So, they built bridges to cross the Euphrates River and made their way to the gates of Aleppo, Syria. Ibn Kathir described that "they laid siege to it for seven days, then gave its people a promise of security. They betrayed that promise, conquered the city, and killed so many of its people that none knows the numbers except Allah. They plundered their wealth, enslaved their women and children, and did to them almost exactly what they had done to the people of Baghdad."

Here, Ibn Kathir mentioned that an individual by the name of Sayf ad-Din Qutuz once had a dream. Qutuz said: "I saw the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in a dream, and he said to me: "You will rule the lands of Egypt, and you will break the Mongols." Qutuz had this dream when he was only a child. Indeed, when he grew into a man, he found himself ruling Egypt at the time the Mongols were right next door laying waste to Syria. Upon learning that their next intended stop was Egypt, he decided to go to them before they came to him. So, he gathered his troops in Egypt and set out for Syria to face the Mongols and teach them a lesson. On Friday, the 25th of Ramadan, Sayf ad-Din Qutuz confronted them at a place in Syria called 'Ayn Jalut. The fighting was extreme and intense. Qutuz was so brave that, as Ibn Kathir described, even when his horse was killed, he remained standing on foot in the middle of the battlefield. The other commanders later asked him: "Why didn't you just take someone else's horse? If the enemy saw you, you would've been killed, and Islam would have perished because of you!" He replied: "As for me, I would've gone straight to Paradise. As for Islam, it has a Lord Who will never abandon it." Qutuz and his army then began to "chase the Mongols, killing them everywhere. They followed them into Aleppo, and some of them fled Damascus. This occurred on Sunday, the 27th of Ramadan, on the morning of the victory at 'Ayn Jalut that they had glad tidings of. The Muslims of Damascus began chasing the Mongols, killing and capturing them, reclaiming their wealth, and freeing

those they had taken captive." The battle was over, and the Mongols were expelled from Syria.

After Sayf ad-Din Qutuz had put a stop to the Mongol expansion into the Muslim world, he turned around and headed back to Egypt.